

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-20 were pending in this application. Withdrawn claims 14-18 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 1 and 20 have been amended and new claims 21 and 22 have been added hereby. Accordingly, claims 1-13 and 19-22 will be pending herein upon entry of this Amendment. Support for the amendment to each of the claims can be found, for example, in Figures 1-3, 4 and 5 of the present application. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 9, 10 and 19. The new claims correspond to allowable claims 9 and 10. For the reasons stated below, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Sawase et al., and the remaining claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sawase et al. alone, or in view of at least one of Iso et al., Ogura et al. or Kawai et al. To the extent these grounds of rejection might still be applied to claims presently pending in this application, they are respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 1 sets forth, among other things, that the case is formed with a plurality of projections extending toward the light sources in corresponding relationship thereto, and that each of the projections has a tip surface facing a light-emitting surface of a respective one of the light sources for blocking light emitted from the respective light source. This feature is clearly

shown in Fig. 2 and is technically significant for preventing light concentration to realize uniform light irradiation.

USP No. 6,014,231 to Sawase et al. discloses an image sensor wherein a light passage 2b is divided by partitions 2c into a plurality of sections. However, a side surface of the light passage 2b or a partition 2c (which the Examiner considers as an equivalent of the claimed light-blocking surface) is not a tip surface of a projection extending toward an LED 7 (light source), nor does it face the light-emitting surface of the LED 7. Therefore, this reference, even if interpreted broadly, does not meet the limitations set forth in amended claim 1.

Amended claim 20 sets forth, among other things, that the lens array includes a lens holder and a plurality of lenses held in the lens holder, and that the projection of the transparent plate comes into pressing contact with the lens holder without contacting the lenses. This feature is clearly shown in Figs. 1, 3, 4 and 6. Due to this feature, the lenses of the lens array are not damaged by contact with the projection of the transparent plate, and the projection does not adversely affect optical reading of the image.

Fig. 11 of USP No. 5,489,995 to Iso et al. shows a transparent plate 4 which has a downward projection held in contact with the entire top surface of a lens array 7. Therefore, the projection comes into damaging contact with the lenses of the lens array (see also Fig. 22).

None of the other cited references discloses or suggests the features discussed above and recited in the independent claims.

In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is

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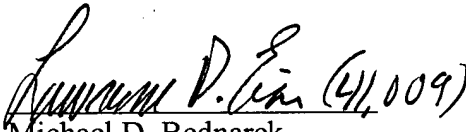
desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: None

MDB/LDE/dkp

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